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## AMERICA AND THE LIFE OF REASON. II

## V

The discussion of James and Royce by the last survivor of the great school brings together in a fashion vivid and touching and beautiful the diversified spirit of its oneness, the uncompromised singularity of each member of that high fellowship. There is neither need nor service here to expound and review the differences between Mr. Santayana and his colleagues, and to resume his criticisms, profound or wise or mischievous or uncomprehending, of idealism and pragmatism, or his harder, less urbane, somewhat contemptuous judgment of the new realism. These have been often stated and are well known, but the perfection of their form adds an esthetic, not a logical, value to their content. Nor is anything added to the method. Mr. Santayana still restates the alien doctrine in the light, not of its own premise and the signification of its own terms, but of his own view as critic. He still makes the same assumption that such a shift of the premises does not put the argument beside the point, that it does not, like the "higher superstition," convert inquiry into an exercise in assurance, that it is not in its own turn the arguing of a foregone conclusion. Take as an instance, the discussion of James's ideas regarding the will to believe: "In some cases," Mr. Santayana interprets, "faith in success could nerve us to bring success about, and so justify itself by its own operation. This is thought typical of James at his worst—a worst in which there is always a good side. Here again psychological observation is used with the best intentions to hearten oneself and other people; but the fact observed is not at all understood, and a moral twirl is given to it which (besides being morally questionable) almost amounts to falsifying the fact itself. Why does the belief that you can jump a ditch help you to jump it? Because it is symptom of the fact that you *could* jump it, that your legs were fit and that the ditch was two yards wide and not twenty. A rapid and just appreciation of these facts has given you your confidence, or at least has made it reasonable, manly and prophetic; otherwise you would have been a fool and got a ducking for it. Assurance is contemptible and fatal unless it is self-knowledge. If you had been rattled you might have failed, because that would have been a symptom of the fact that you were out of gear; you would have been afraid because you trembled, as James at his best proclaimed. You would never have quailed if your system had

been reacting smoothly to its opportunities, any more than you would titter and see double if you were not intoxicated. . . . Nor is the moral suggestion here less unsound. What is good is not the presumption of power but the possession of it: a clear head, aware of its resources, not a fuddled optimism, calling up spirits from the vasty deep. Courage is not a virtue, said Socrates, unless it is also wisdom. Could anything be truer both of courage in doing and of courage in believing? But it takes tenacity, it takes *reasonable* courage, to stick to scientific insights such as this of Socrates or that of James about the emotions; it is easier to lapse into the traditional manner, to search natural philosophy for miracles and moral lessons, and in morals prefer, in the reasoned expression of preference, to splash about without a philosophy."

Those who recall the passage in "The Sentiment of Rationality" on which these sentences are commentary will perceive at once how it is parodied, and—the observation is unavoidable—degraded. An unwonted and momentous situation is made over into a commonplace one; an issue of life and death into one of walking or getting a ducking; an abyss is converted into a ditch, a terrible leap into an ordinary jump. The propulsive emotional crisis, the absence or impossibility of any basis competent for inference are converted into their opposites. The *process* of the self-confirmation of the act of faith that creates its own verification is displaced by the prior guarantee in observation of this verification. Prospect and change are declared to be really retrospect and fixity; you *have* jumped the ditch because you *could*. The whole premise of the argument has been shifted and the contrary conclusion drawn from the contrary premise. The risk, on which courage is postulated, the conception of faith as the willingness, in James's words, "to act in a cause the prosperous issue of which is *not* certified to us in advance," or as the "courage weighted with responsibility—such courage as the Nelsons and Washingtons never failed to show after they had taken everything into account that might tell against their success and made every provision to minimize disaster," these are ruled out. After much brave protestation, the game is made a game with loaded dice after all, made just what in James's hypothesis it absolutely was not. In effect, the argument does not refute, it contradicts. Mr. Santayana's philosophy runs parallel with those of his colleagues but does not meet them. The same heaven arches over them, whose shifting iridescence they alike give back; they are fed by the same springs and they water the same lands and are by them muddied, and that is all. They touch sometimes, but mingle never, and perhaps never could.

It is this mingling of the same earth and sky in their separate streams that renders them alike American. Neither could Santayana escape the bondage of the "two different responsibilities," that of "describing things as they are, and that of finding them propitious to certain preconceived human desires." For the life of reason is no less such a desire, and for all its obscurity no less pervasive, and for all its urbanity no less capable of becoming a dogma and generating a religion than the "higher superstition." The adventure after the "good life" was undertaken by all three alike, under a similar impulsion and in a similar atmosphere. That what each found should have been different is not without its implication of the nature of things, or of the condition of the intellectual life in the United States. And that one kind of life only should be called a good life, and that of a fashion arising not from the soil of present life, but from a memory and estimate of life long gone, that perhaps is most romantic and American of all.

Of the relations of James and James's thought to this America, Mr. Santayana says very little. He remarks how essentially different and other James appeared to the academic and social community in which he dwelt, how he was a liberal—"one of those elder Americans still disquieted by the ghost of tyranny, social and ecclesiastical," but nothing more. He ignores his militant love of peace, so essentially American, his reformist spirit, so characteristic of New England. His preoccupation is entirely with James's temperament and philosophy. These he sums up as "a romantic mind soaked in agnosticism, conscious of its own habits and assuming an environment the exact structure of which can never be observed;" the conception of radical empiricism and pragmatism as methods, the analysis of belief, the notion of pure experience, the analysis of truth, and the other spokes in the wheel of James's thought are really treated as radiations from this central hub. Consequently, James's greatness accrues to him as a psychologist, not as a philosopher. Philosophy was to him, in Mr. Santayana's estimation, not a "consolation and a sanctuary in life which would have been unsatisfying without it," but "a maze in which he found himself wandering," and he was trying to find his way out of the maze. But this philosophy, Mr. Santayana fails to recognize, was the verbiage of the schools; it was not the way out or the brave seeing of the contradiction in things and in oneself which he as bravely celebrated in his description of the Harvard school.

Yet, to the American aspect of this contradiction in things and men James was a philosopher most sensitive. In his training and contacts he was essentially more cosmopolitan than either of his colleagues; his philosophy was nevertheless an insight into the eternal

springs of this contradiction, flowing so much more freely, into channels so much less artificial in America than in Europe. He had a greater natural kinship with America's spontaneous life and he envisaged in a pertinent metaphysical premise the whole unbalanced and shifting structure of the changing American economy; the atomism and fluidity of American society; the democratic dogma; and, most famously and influentially, the tenacious experimentalism, the swift courage, the stark faith of men to put life and property and opinion to the proof of adventure into the unknown wilderness toward whatever "good life" nature suggested or calculation advised.

In Royce's thinking the same influences are present, but not freely. Between them and his vision there is interposed the veil of the genteel tradition, and its unity and texture imparts to them a false solidity. He is not, like James, looking at the tradition as well as the thing, and evaluating the tradition also. He is looking at the thing, certainly, persistently, and looking at it *through* the tradition. Hence a certain liturgical unction and obscurity which pervades Royce's thought. He viewed everything, Mr. Santayana says, in relation to something else, and this something contained invariably an element sad and troublesome, out of which the thing under view, if good, arises by a sort of Hegelian implication. His proof of the existence of God is his demonstration of the reality of error; his assurance of the reality of the good was his experience of the power of evil. He argued, in effect, in his own special way the foregone conclusions of the "higher superstition." His philosophy was all compensatory. By translating Calvinism into epistemological terms, by imparting to the dialectic method of Hegel the earnestness, eloquence and voluble passion of his own temperament and scene, he gave the genteel tradition a new pattern and an added content. This was not logical. He had, it is true, a reputation for logic and loved the intricacies of logistics; he could, on occasion, eye to eye with Spinoza, see things under the aspect of eternity. But "there was no clearness in his heart." In him the intellect, which Mr. Santayana regards as the "faculty of seeing things as they are," was dimmed and distorted by the passion for seeing things as we want them to be. Nevertheless, the hardness of the nature of things, its pang and poison, troubled Royce. He had a reverence for what hurts: "in so far as God was the devil . . . devil worship was true religion." Life and the good of life are the struggle between good and evil, and the struggle can not be unless evil exists the peer of good. The proof of this was evident in daily routine as well as Hegelian logic. Royce "had always experienced and seen about him a groping, burdened, mediocre life; he had observed how fortune is

continually lying in ambush for us, in order to bring good out of evil and evil out of good. In his age and country all was change, preparation, hurry, material achievement; nothing was an old and sufficient possession. . . . The whole scene was filled with acts and virtues which were merely useful or remedial. The most pressing arts, like war and forced labour, presuppose evil, work immense havoc, and take the place of greater possible goods. The most indispensable virtues, like courage and industry, do likewise. But these seemed in Royce's world the only honorable things." Thus the grappling with nature of which so much of American life consists was converted into a standard of life, and given such grace and distinction as clothing it in the decent garment of the genteel tradition might impart. In this lay Royce's personal conscience, and it carried him beyond his Hegelian ethics, as his protest against the sinking of the *Lusitania* showed. By training and technique a Hegelian, by implication a solipsist, this conscience of his, which "added a deep, almost remorseful unrest to his hard life," carried him beyond Hegelism, making his God real, and begging the gratuity of another life in the immortal society of his friends. All in all, Royce "resembled some great-hearted mediaeval peasant visited by mystical promptings, whom the monks should have adopted and allowed to browse among their theological folios. . . . His was a gothic and scholastic spirit, intent on honoring God in systematic works, like the coral insect or the spider; eventually creating a fabric that in its homely intricacy and fulness arrested and moved the heart, the web of it was so vast, and so full of mystery and yearning."

It may be inferred from Mr. Santayana's treatment of both James and Royce that the fulness of the new world influence was not manifest in them. To him their insight was a mingling of tradition and actualities, with tradition more than a little dominant. In the later contemporary movements of philosophy in America the relationships are, however, reversed. Tradition is either passing or forgotten. He sees the younger professors of philosophy as more like engineers or doctors or social reformers than clergymen or schoolmasters. Religion has ceased to signify anything momentous for them. They are no longer so eloquent and apostolic as professors of philosophy used to be; instead, "very professional in tone and conscious of the *Fack*," a special craft in the academic industry. The younger American professor of philosophy is a person with an education "more pretentious than thorough; his style is deplorable; social pressure and his own great eagerness have condemned him to overwork, committee meetings, early marriage, premature authorship and lecturing two or three times a week under forced draught. He has no peace in himself, no window open to a calm horizon, and in his heart per-

haps little taste for mere scholarship or pure speculation. Yet, like the plain soldier staggering under his clumsy equipment, he is cheerful; he keeps his faith in himself and his allotted work, puts up with being toasted only on one side, remains open-minded, whole-hearted, appreciative, helpful, confident of the future of goodness and of science. In a word, he is a cell in that teeming democratic body; he draws from its warm, contagious activities the sanctions of his own life, and less consciously the spirit of his philosophy."

The marching front of this spirit is to be found in pragmatism and new realism. The former is a confusion of mind which converts truth, the vision of all things under the form of eternity, ever beyond the reach of psychology, into the psychological doctrine of the relation of signs to things signified, interpreting this relation in terms of contiguity and succession. The latter is a standing on its head of the traditional German idealism. This replaced things by consciousness; the new realism replaces consciousness by things. It relieves "an overtaxed and self-infected generation" by "abolishing a prerequisite to the obvious, and leaving the obvious to stand alone." It democratizes reality by reducing everything to the same status and making it equally accessible to everybody. "The young American is thus reassured: his joy in living and learning is no longer chilled by the contempt which idealism used to cast on nature for being imaginary and on science for being intellectual." Both the contemporary schools thus reflect the atmosphere of America, and in two ways. First, in that "it has accelerated and rendered fearless the disintegration of conventional categories. . . . In the second place, the younger cosmopolitan America has favoured the impartial assemblage and mutual confrontation of all sorts of ideas. It has produced, in intellectual matters, a sort of happy watchfulness and insecurity." And this is how migration to the new world has affected philosophical ideas.

Which may be so. But I doubt whether even those pragmatists and new realists who have been curious about just such matters and have reflected on them will recognize the features of their ancestry or themselves in the portrait. "The disintegration of conventional categories," they will concede, but the new realists will insist, I think, that so far as they are concerned it is a conventional and not an American disintegration, and that the forces which operate it in America do not differ in kind, intensity or range from those in Europe. The pragmatists will concede the total implication of the description, but will declare that Mr. Santayana has altogether failed to grasp its character and import. This failure is perhaps at base emotional rather than intellectual. Mr. Santayana has always manifested a certain blindness to the ideas of change and

time and flux in their intrinsicity and inwardness, and a certain imperviousness to the meaning of the categories and concepts which have grown out of them, and the new philosophic technique which they have generated. Preoccupied with the eternal, the static, the immutable, as Plato and Aristotle and Spinoza have formulated these in ethics and physics and psychology, he has invariably translated the studies of the temporalists into the language of the eternalists, substituting these incommensurables for one another, with beautiful but not cogent results. With the new realists, on the other hand, he is more at home. He and they have the same devotion and speak the same language. They also are eternalists, preoccupied with the unchanging structure of things. They are, however, so preoccupied, not because they recognize change and acquiesce in insecurity, but because they deny change and, fearing, resent insecurity. That they have "abolished the prerequisite to the obvious" is a sign of this denial and resentment. This abolition is not a simplification which frees the new realist's "joy in living and learning . . . from the contempt which idealism used to cast on nature for being imaginary and on science for being didactic." On the contrary, there appears to be no joy in the neo-realist. He is as Calvinistic as his forebears. Only the incidence of the cosmic compulsion has been shifted for him. It resides no longer in the immutable decrees of a transcendental God, but in the immutable architectonic of a nature whose laws operate by logistical implication and whose providence is didactic without being altogether personal. Thus, together with the denial of a prerequisite to the obvious goes the establishment and cultivation of security, the relaxation of watchfulness. It is an attenuation of the "higher superstition," but it is the higher superstition still. It is the modern scholasticism, the scholasticism of science converted from a method of inquiry into a process of affirmation, from the logic of experiment to the logic of assertion. Its social inspiration is to be sought in financial industrialism, with the regimentation, precision, inevitability of the automatic machine in shop and factory, and in the similar qualities more refined in the mathematics of accounting in bank and office. It is unrelated to the sentiment, experience and aspiration of the migration to the new world. That has still not reached expression in philosophy. It is as yet vocal in poetry alone.

## VI

So much, then, for Mr. Santayana's resolution of the puzzle of America. It is complementary rather than parallel to those of his predecessors and fellows in the field, dealing with an inward aspect of American character and opinion too withdrawn and elusive for



any but a familiar friend to touch without distorting or to interpret without misunderstanding. It has the same narrowness and oversimplification as these others, but if it is blind to what they have seen, it is keenly sensitive to what they are blind to. Mr. Santayana is himself perhaps too deeply absorbed by the ardors and glories of the topmost turn given to life to have much sympathy for its soil or roots or branches. His study has failed to take note of the political character of the American being, of the overwhelming influence of the rigid identities of political pattern of state, nation and city, or the power of the public school as the transmittor of the national tradition and the perpetuator of the democratic dogma, or the relation of these to the stratifying influence of the automatic machine, or the interaction of these with the diversities of soil and climate, race and culture which are constitutive of the land, and the additional diversities which are added by "the miscellany of Europe." These seem to me at the present time to have been adjusted to one another as a tensive and unstable equilibrium of forces rather than a cooperation of spirits; the various movements in art or philosophy appear more truly as negations of them or compensations for them than as their expression. What the America of the new time will be depends altogether on how soon and how completely the unstable equilibrium of forces is converted into the cooperation of spirits, and the negations and compensations become affirmations and expressions.

H. M. KALLEN

THE NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

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### REVIEWS AND ABSTRACTS OF LITERATURE

*Psychopathology*. EDWARD J. KEMPF. St. Louis: C. V. Mosby Co. 1920. Pp. 762.

Dr. Kempf has given us in this work not only the closest approximation to a treatise on psychopathology that has yet appeared, but also offers us a volume replete with suggestions—valuable both to the student of normal and of abnormal human conduct—concerning the development of human reaction systems. The psychopathological studies of which this book is an example not only mark a definite advance in the attempt of psychopathologists to understand unadaptable persons and their variant behavior, but they also add materially to the debt which psychology has been owing to students of abnormal phenomena since the days of Charcot and Liébault. How great this debt is which psychology owes to the psychopathologist may easily be ascertained by observing the changes both in viewpoint and in factual material which recent psychological